

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

HON. TIM HOLDEN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Chairman, I am greatly concerned about cuts that have been made to Farm Bill programs through this agriculture appropriations bill. I believe that using mandatory Farm Bill money to pay for an annual spending bill is unacceptable, and it's simply not fair to our farmers.

Appropriators and authorizers have long fought over mandatory and discretionary dollars; however, since 2004, we've seen a large increase in the amount of mandatory money used to pay for programs in the appropriations bill. We all worked very hard during the last Farm Bill. We agreed and put together a safety net for all farmers, and dedicated money to conservation, rural development, and other programs, but have since witnessed a significant portion of our annual funding be redirected.

With falling farm income because of higher energy and production costs, along with lower farm gate prices, now is the worst time to cut this funding for our agricultural producers. I'm worried about dropping the bottom out from underneath our agricultural producers and rural citizens through cuts to conservation and rural development programs, which have already taken disproportionate reductions in funding.

Conservation programs assist our farmers and ranchers in strengthening their environmental stewardship, which is so important for looking after land and water that we will pass on to our future generations. By investing in enhanced environmental protection of land and water, the public benefits from an overall improved quality of life; affordable food, cleaner, safer, and more dependable water supplies; reduced damages caused by floods and other natural disasters; abundant wildlife; scenic landscapes and an enhanced natural resource base. Cutting important conservation programs while we're facing a huge backlog of producers waiting to participate in these programs will hinder these efforts.

I am especially concerned about cuts to the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection program. Since 1996, the program, in partnership with state and local governments and nongovernmental organizations, has kept over 440,000 acres of productive farmland in agricultural uses. FRPP is an excellent way of preserving farmland for many years to come, and helps provide a means for maintaining a viable rural economy.

Additionally, rural development programs are vital to ensuring that our traditionally-agriculturally based communities do not simply vanish because of farm and job loss. I am concerned about cuts to an important rural development program that assists farmers in adding value to their products. Rural development initiatives help to advance our rural communities, develop new markets, and provide economic growth.

Mr. Chairman, I respect the appropriators in the difficult task they have been given in this tight budget climate, but I ask that they respect the funding amounts put forth in the Farm Bill, and not make cuts to mandatory programs.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, as a Member of Congress who's served in the Peace Corps, I've always considered myself a man of peace.

I strongly support current U.S. law that prevents any funding from going to Hamas, which the State Department has rightly classified as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. A Hamas controlled Palestinian Authority is antithetical to a peaceful Middle East or a two-state solution.

On May 23 the House approved H.R. 4681, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006. If I was convinced that passage of this bill would foster peace in the Middle East, I would have voted for it. Unfortunately, I felt compelled to oppose the bill because I do not believe it will help Israel, our only democratic ally in the region, or improve grassroots efforts to reach a peace agreement. In particular, H.R. 4681 would make it nearly impossible to fund nongovernmental organization (NGO) reconciliation programs that work to build peace. By funding NGOs that work towards reconciliation and peace we undermine the ideology of hate that Hamas perpetuates. The Senate version of this bill, S. 2370, specifically includes an exception that allows for funding for coexistence and reconciliation activities: "(2) ASSISTANCE TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY—Assistance to promote democracy, human rights, freedom of the press, non-violence, reconciliation, and peaceful co-existence, provided that such assistance does not directly benefit Hamas or other foreign terrorist organizations." If the joint House-Senate conference agrees to include the above Senate language in the conference report, I will support H.R. 4681.

A secure Israel and a two-state solution are the cornerstones to achieving peace in the region, and grassroots conflict prevention is the critical first step of the foundation for peace.

STATEMENT ON H.R. 4681, PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, today, the House considers H.R. 4681, legislation that I'm sad to say is both overbroad in its reach and misses the mark by penalizing the Palestinian people without compelling Hamas to abandon its anti-Israeli rhetoric, its rejectionist policies and its support for terror and violence.

First of all, Madam Speaker, I want to be clear: I have always and continue to unequivocally denounce and condemn any and all terrorist acts, whether committed by Hamas or any other terrorist group.

That is why I voted for S. Con. Res 79 in February which declared that that no U.S. assistance should be provided directly to the

Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

My position on Hamas's responsibilities in light of its having attained a majority of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council, and thus its assumption of power as the governing party of the Palestinian Authority, has been clear:

Hamas must recognize Israel; Hamas must renounce violence and terrorism; Hamas must abide by previous peace agreements, like the Oslo accord, and act in accordance with the Roadmap; and

Hamas must return the Palestinians to the negotiating table with Israel, and reach the mutually agreeable peace agreement that is called for in the Roadmap and the earlier agreements.

This is Hamas's responsibility of governance. I believe the United States should do everything that it can to both insist upon and to facilitate Hamas taking up this burden of responsibility, and we should not rest until the goal of a negotiated settlement is achieved. Moreover, we should not slow the Middle East peace process by making these targets preconditions for our engagement in the process. As the assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin reminded us: I do not need to make peace with my friends.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to understand that engagement and negotiation for peace is a process not an event, and it necessarily involves the belligerents to a conflict not those whom we would aspire to put at the negotiating table.

I agree that we should not fund Hamas, but not at the expense of average Palestinians which is the end result of this legislation. Among other things, this legislation obstructs a

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I regret that because of a family medical emergency I could not be present when the House voted today and I would like to submit this statement for the record in support of H.R. 4681, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act.

Hamas' continued refusal to recognize the existence of Israel, enforce existing peace agreements and renounce terrorism represents a real threat to progress in the Middle East peace process. It is therefore critical that the United States send the strongest possible signal to Hamas that a government based on fear and intolerance is unacceptable. H.R. 4681 is an important step towards addressing the extreme and unproductive positions currently held by Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. However, there are some in Connecticut and across the country that remain concerned that the bill goes too far in restricting the financial assistance the Palestinian people rely on or may have far-reaching and unintended consequences. To this end, I look forward to

working with my colleagues to ensure that this bill achieves our common shared goal of fostering a Palestinian government that is a full partner in achieving a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

HONORING RICHARD SHOEMAKER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, this June will witness the retirement of Richard Shoemaker after an unusually illustrious career in the American labor movement.

He rose from an eighteen-year-old worker at John Deere in Illinois to serve three terms as vice-president of the United Auto Workers.

He rose up the ranks on the basis of his strong talents of mind and spirit. No matter what rung he was on, he never forgot where he started.

The result was an exceptional dedication to work for the well-being of his fellow and sister workers. He was proud that the labor movement, of which he was a vital part, was playing a key role in creating a strong middle class in America, one that gave workers a chance to obtain what many of their parents dreamed for their children to have, and which so many did not possess before the labor movement—a truly decent wage, decent health care, some security for their retirement, and educational opportunity for their children.

That was infused in his work as a President of his local at the age of 27, as an international representative appointed at the age of 30 by Walter Reuther, and in key administrative posts for UAW vice president Steve Yokich and President Owen Bieber.

He was called upon to tackle tough issues. Some years ago it was the effort to resolve a long conflict in labor management relations at Caterpillar.

Greater challenges still lay ahead. The American auto industry is now tackling perhaps the most dramatic challenges in its history. As vice-president of the UAW for GM and

Delphi, Dick Shoemaker is in the very center of the storm, using his deep talents, intelligence and experience to work toward answers that can sustain the domestic auto industry that he loves and helped build, while remaining faithful to the workers to whom he has dedicated his life's work.

Dick Shoemaker also learned early on the lesson that what goes on in the public sector and government can vitally affect any efforts and gains obtained in negotiations in the private sector. So he assumed a variety of major political responsibilities on behalf of the Union and in the Democratic Party. During these decades of unusual challenge, commitment, and achievement, Dick has been blessed by a wonderful partner, his wife Mary.

This Thursday, May 25, there will be a dinner held to give full tribute on his retirement to Dick Shoemaker. Mr. Speaker, I speak not only for myself as an admirer and friend, but I know for many, many others who say to Dick Shoemaker—congratulations on an illustrious career leaving its major mark on many yesterdays, and for many tomorrows.